

Bates in fine form against old club — scores equaliser

Sports Mail Special Report

WYCOMBE WAN 1 : TOOTING AND M 1

PAUL Bates, the England international forward who left Wycombe Wanderers in the close season to join Tooting and Mitcham, had a fine game against his old club, scoring the equalising goal just after half-time.

Wycombe Wanderers: Brown; Beck, Lewis; Thomas, Fisher, Gale; Worley, Ashby, Cook, Holmes, Rockell.

Tooting: Farlan; Holder, Good; Holden, Bennett, Wright; Roberts, Knox, Bates, Edwards, Levy.

Referee: B C Parson (Lyneham).

It was Wycombe, not international-studded Tooting—who took the initiative and Ivor Ashby was only inches away from scoring within 20secs. Goalkeeper Farlan was beaten by the inside-forward's flick but left-back Roger Good cleared off the goal-line.

Bates, who was given a great reception, played a typical deep-lying game, splaying passes to his inside forwards. Fisher was having a great duel with his old clubmate. In one flashing move Bates sent a pass streaking through the Wycombe defence but Edwards missed badly.

But it was Wanderers, splendidly served by half-backs, Thomas, Fisher and Gale, who were taking the fight to Tooting.

Wycombe's new centre-forward Peter Cook, a converted centre-half, tried desperately hard and the experienced Bennett was at full stretch.

Yet it was Tommy Holmes and Len Worley who were the greatest threat to the harassed Tooting defence. Worley wrong-footed Wright in one brilliant dribble, but the move was blocked.

Tooting became rattled by the Wycombe pressure and after 36 minutes made a bad mistake. The defence stood still as Worley's wing pass reached Ashby, waiting for offside.

The referee waved play on and HOLMES calmly converted the centre.

Holmes nearly added a second as Tooting defended under pressure. Then Ashby just failed to connect with a Worley corner kick.

Half-time: Wycombe 1, Tooting 0.

GREAT EQUALISER

Fifty seconds after the restart **BATES** scored a great equaliser, accepting Edward's back pass and crashing a rising shot past Brown. Bates was in irresistible form this half. Once again he raced past Fisher but this time he blazed wide.

Although Wycombe were full of fight, Tooting had recovered a lot of their poise and Bennett dominated Cook.

The gallant Ashby made a noble effort to reach a Worley centre, beat the goal-keeper to the ball and shot just wide.

Knox flashed a great shot into the Wycombe net but he was off-side before the ball reached him.

Tooting had a dramatic escape when Ashby and Holmes broke through the middle. Ashby shot against goalkeeper Farlan and Holmes's drive on the rebound was going into goal when Bennett intercepted on the line.

Both sides pressed hard in a thrilling finish to a tense and evenly matched game.

RESULT

WYCOMBE W. 1
TOOTING AND M. 1